

SUNDAY AFTERNOON ADDRESSES.

GALILEO.

On Feb. 2nd, Prof. Marshall spoke on Galileo. The text chosen for the address was our Lord's command, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Galileo's life will illustrate the error committed by the Church, when she ignorantly interferes with the inspired expounders of God's great book, the Universe. It also teaches that while the student must fearlessly proclaim the truth, he cannot be too careful to avoid awakening the fears or exciting the prejudices of the weak, the unreasonable, and the superstitious.

Galileo was born at Pisa, Feb. 18th, 1564, the day of Michael Angelo's death. The son of a Florentine noble, he was educated at Florence and at the University of Pisa. While still an undergraduate he discovered the isochronism of the pendulum from observing a swinging lamp in a cathedral. This and subsequent discoveries won for him the title of "The Archimedes of his time." At twenty-five he became Professor of Mathematics in his Alma Mater, and while in this position he discovered that the velocity of a falling body depends on its density and not on its weight, as had hitherto been supposed. His success at Pisa created so many enemies that he resigned his professorship after two years and returned to Florence. The following year he was appointed Professor at Padua, where he greatly distinguished himself. From his correspondence at this time with Kepler, it is known that he held the Copernican theory of the solar system. This was in direct opposition to the teaching of the Church, which maintained that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that the sun, moon and stars turned around the earth for the enjoyment of man. Galileo was the first to employ the telescope for astronomical research, and in 1610 he discovered the satellites of Jupiter. Soon after he discovered sun spots and thence proved the sun's rotation. These and other discoveries aroused the hostility of the Church and finally brought him before the Inquisition. After a trial extending over several months, Galileo was found guilty; his book was prohibited and he himself condemned to prison at the will of his judges. Then followed his public recantation, presented before the whole assembly as a means of escape from merciless torture. For the rest of his life he remained a prisoner of the Inquisition. His teachings, however, having been duly anathematized, much liberty was allowed him, and he spent his remaining days in the homes of acquaintances or friends. He died in 1642. The Church that persecuted him has been summoned before the bar of his disciples and has in turn been tried and condemned.

FERGUSON.

Owing to the unfavorable weather, only a small audience assembled, on Feb. 9th, to hear Prof. Dupuis' address on Ferguson, the Scottish Astronomer. Those who did attend, however, were amply repaid, and we are only sorry that space will not allow us to publish the address in full for the benefit of those who were not privileged to hear it. After speaking of the inspiration he had received in youth from the writings of this great astronomer, the Professor went on to give a detailed account of his life.

James Ferguson was born near Keith, in 1710, of poor but honest parents. Aside from the meagre instruction given him by his father, his opportunities for an education consisted of only three months' attendance at the Grammar School at Keith. While education in schools and colleges is beneficial to all, it is less of a necessity to the man of resplendent genius than to the man of mediocrity. When about seven years old he evinced an interest in mechanics and made a study of the lever, which led on to his invention of the wheel and axle, models of which he constructed on his father's lathe. He then wrote a treatise on these subjects, and only discovered after he had finished that his conclusions were not new. At the age of ten he became shepherd-boy for a neighbor, and did his work carefully and well. While thus engaged he began to study the stars and continued doing so after entering upon service with a farmer, Mr. James Glashan. This employer proved very kind to him, and often relieved him of work that he might have time to perfect his copies of the stars. Three years later, a gentleman of the vicinity, Thos. Grant, Esq., being attracted by a map drawn by Ferguson, took the lad under his patronage and had him taught by his butler, Mr. Cantly, a man of considerable attainments in various directions. There is no more forcible illustration of Ferguson's modesty than his glowing testimony to Cantly's ability, which was written at the close of his life, when his own reputation greatly surpassed that of his former teacher. His ability in sepia and India-ink drawing won him new friends, and after a short residence with a Mr. Baird, he went to Edinburgh, where he studied medicine for two years, only to return with renewed zeal to the study of Astronomy. His construction of the Astronomical Rotula made him known in London, and thither he went in 1733, four years after his marriage. He there secured enough work to maintain himself and family, and devoted all his spare moments to invention and study along astronomical lines. He finally attained the goal of his ambition and became a lecturer in astronomy. He gave several courses in London, Liverpool, and other cities, and presented his subject in so entertaining a manner as to completely